

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 961

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Savannah Stair of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn that Savannah Stair had lost her lifelong battle with cancer and passed away on March 22, 2006; and

WHEREAS, an outstanding young lady in numerous respects, Savannah was the daughter of our former colleague and great friend, Billy Stair, and his wife, Carmella; and

WHEREAS, Savannah was born in Nashville's Baptist Hospital on October 2, 1988; the family moved to Knoxville in 1994, when Billy Stair began his service with the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Savannah was first diagnosed with cancer as a third-grade student at Rocky Hill Elementary School; after undergoing her first round of chemotherapy, Savannah, a huge Lady Vols fan, began wearing a cap featuring her favorite sports team; soon thereafter, her teacher, Ms. Bobby Kobosky, and her classmates adopted Savannah's fashion statement by wearing caps themselves; and

WHEREAS, an avid reader of two to three books per week, Savannah's love for reading can be traced back to her days at Rock Hill Elementary, when she raised over eleven thousand dollars in a reading competition ; and

WHEREAS, as a student at Bearden Middle School, Savannah served with distinction as Vice President of the student body; and

WHEREAS, she was also very active in TSA, a speech, debate, and parliamentary organization, and won state and national honors therefrom; at a TSA convention in Orlando, Savannah gave an inspiring speech about her experiences with chemotherapy; and

WHEREAS, as a student at Bearden High School, Savannah hosted her prom party at home in May 2005, with 30-35 dear friends in attendance, including Amy and Sara Luna; and

WHEREAS, by August 2005 Savannah was no longer able to attend school, yet despite her health problems, this courageous young lady insisted upon moving forward with her life; she expressed the desire to work, and with the assistance of Jean Cronan, she obtained a job with the University of Tennessee ticket office; and

WHEREAS, after her initial diagnosis, Savannah received her primary treatment at East Tennessee Children's Hospital, where she celebrated her 17th birthday with the help of her family and several loyal friends; and

WHEREAS, this singular young lady endured seven surgeries and over 300 treatments during the course of her illness, but she never succumbed to self pity or a negative outlook; Savannah's unwavering commitment to living her life to the fullest inspired and continues to inspire everyone who knew and loved her; and

WHEREAS, another positive aspect of Savannah's ordeal was its effect on the growth and maturation of her younger sister, Taylor; through her sister's illness, Taylor learned first-hand the virtues of patience and self-reliance and the importance of extending compassion and assistance to others; Taylor was instrumental in the Stair family's obtaining Henry the Cat, whom Savannah dearly loved; and

WHEREAS, although her experiences at Vanderbilt led her to sing the Vandy fight song for eighteen consecutive years, Savannah's blood ran Big Orange and she was a devoted Lady Vols fan; Savannah had developed a close relationship with Kelly Jolly during the course of her chemotherapy, and when the Lady Vols were eliminated from the 1999 NCAA Tournament, both Kelly and Savannah were reduced to tears; and

WHEREAS, an intelligent, well-rounded young lady, Savannah was interested in politics in addition to her love for sports and entertainment and read voraciously on each of these subjects; she was also well traveled, having visited Paris in 2001 and London in 2004, and she dreamed of living in New York City and attending NYU; and

WHEREAS, Savannah Stair is survived by her loving parents, Billy and Carmella Stair; and her precious sister, Taylor; and

WHEREAS, she will also be deeply missed by a host of friends, including Anna Woods, her friend since the second grade; Emily Chalkley of Nashville, a lifelong friend; Rachel Byington; Zach Jackson, her best friend and competitor; Lance Whitehead; and Zach Roskopf; and

WHEREAS, Savannah Stair enjoyed the pleasures of this world for far too brief a time, yet through her courage and perseverance in the face of adversity and the enduring legacy she has left us we can truly see the meaning of life; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to fondly remember Savannah Stair and the special place she continues to occupy in our hearts; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life of Savannah Stair, even as we mourn her passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to Billy, Carmella, and Taylor Stair and the other family members and friends of Savannah Stair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.